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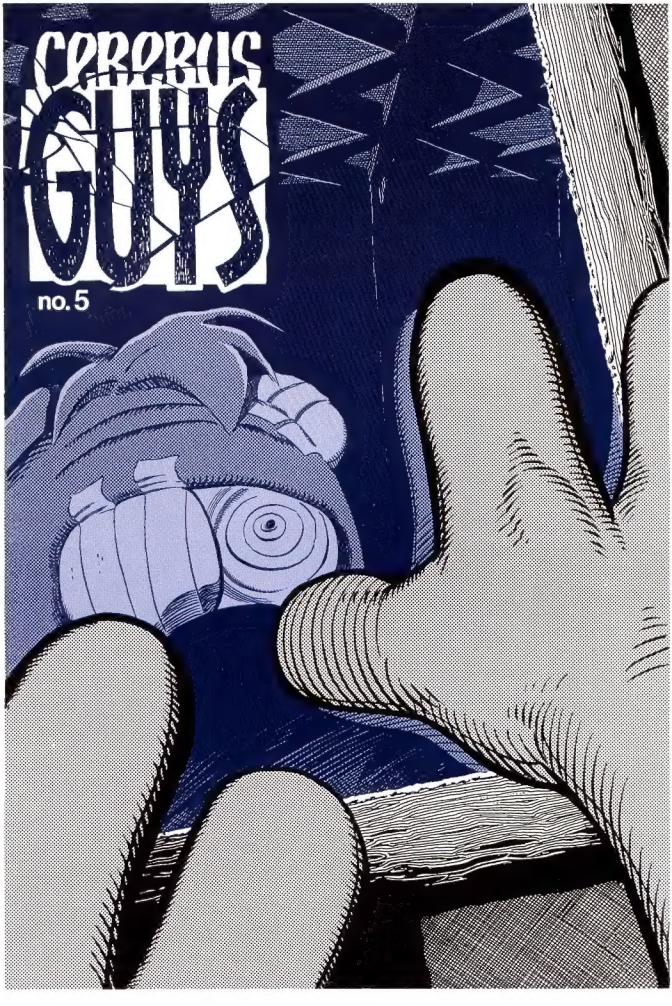

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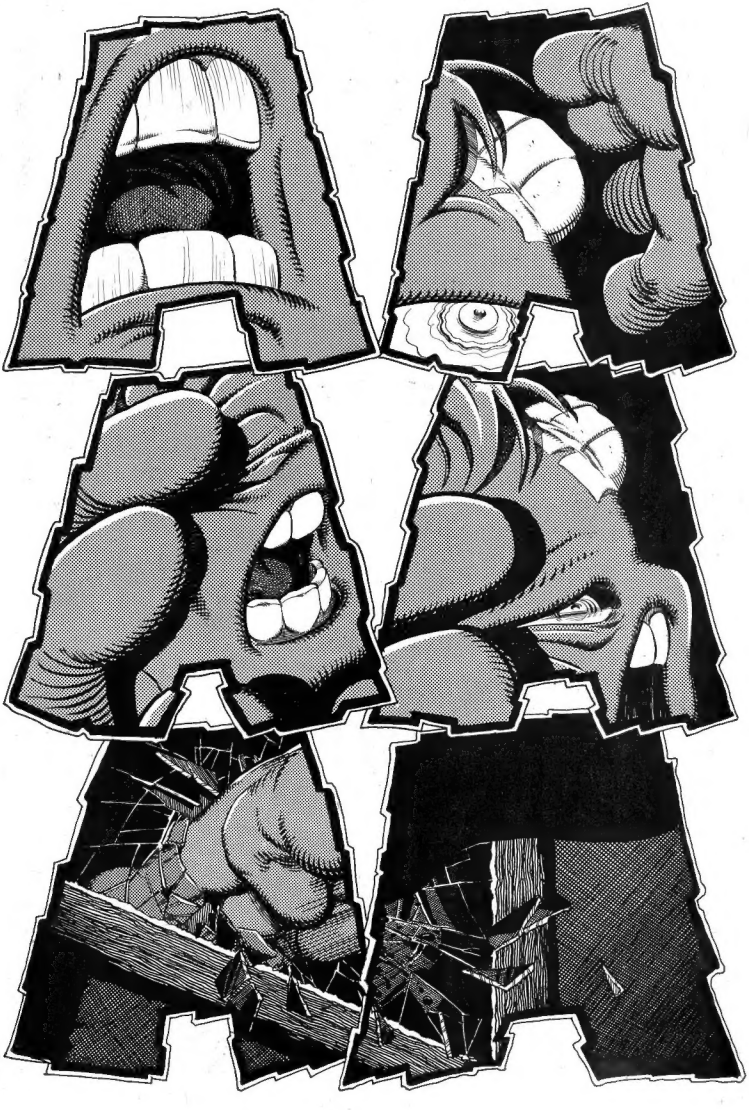
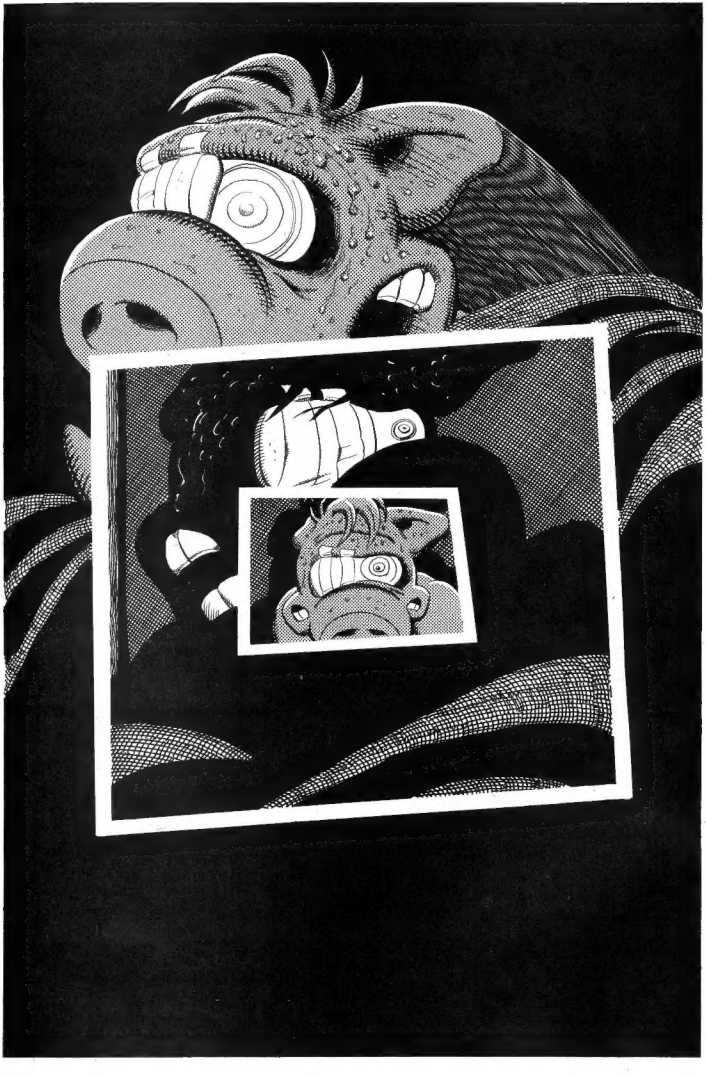
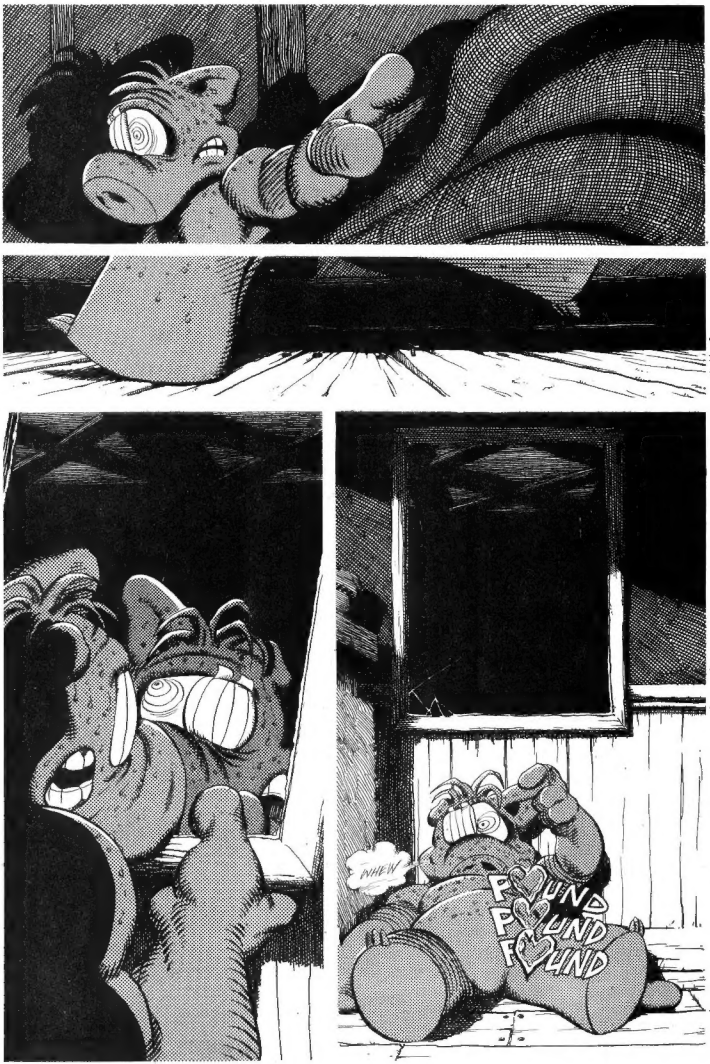
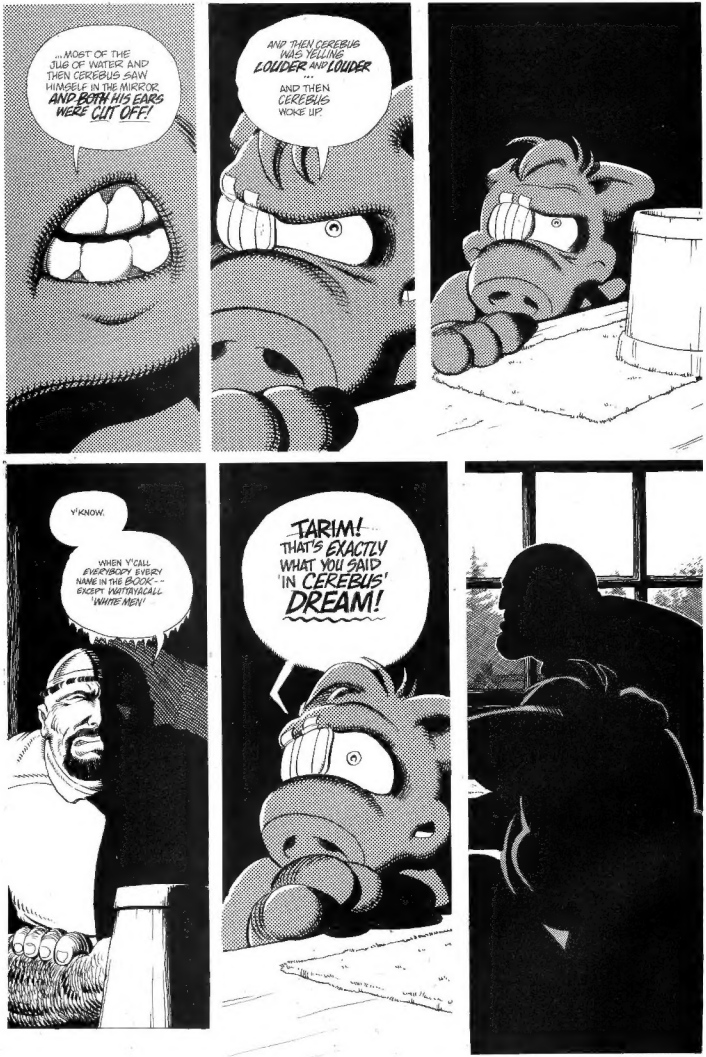





WHEW
POUND
POUND
POUND

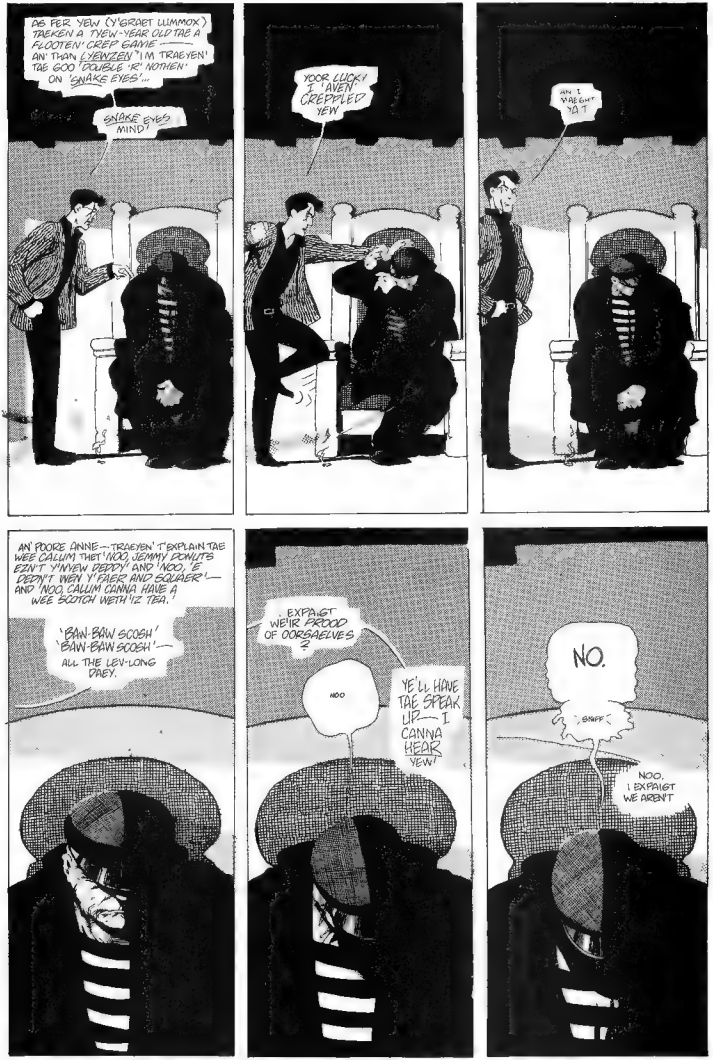

...MOST OF THE JUG OF WATER, AND THEN CEREBUS SAW HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR, AND BOTH HIS EARS WERE CUT OFF!
AND THEN CEREBUS WAS YELLING LOUDER AND LOUDER ... AND THEN CEREBUS WOKE UP.
Y'KNOW.
WHEN Y'CALL EVERYBODY EVERY NAME IN THE BOOK -- EXCEPT WATTAYACALL 'WHITE MEN!
JARIM! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU SAID IN CEREBUS' DREAM!

YOU SEEM TO THINK BECAUSE YOU DON'T REMEMBER DOIN' IT, THAT THAT MEANS YOU DIDN'T DO NOTHIN' WRONG.
DID I SAY THIS IN YOUR DREAM?
EH?...
IT MUST BE A--WATTAYACALL AN OMEN!
OR...
THIS IS AMAZING.
YOU SAID THAT IN CEREBUS' DREAM TOO!

CEREBUS IS PRETTY SURE HE WOULD'VE REMEMBERED THAT.
NAY.

I might've KNOWN!

Alec.
WHAT ABOUT OUR AGREEMENT THEN, AYE?
Oh!
err... ehm
agreement?
DON'T COME THE 'INNOCENT' WI' ME — YOU WERE SUPPOSED TE MIND THE KIDS WHILE ANNE AN' ME WERE ON HOLIDAYS...
Poke. Poke.
Oh.
THAT agreement.
AYE! 'THAT AGREEMENT' — AND HERE I FIND YEW — SWILLIN' — FAREMAENTED BAYVRAGES SMOKIN' — LAEK A BLOODY GRAET CHEMNEY — KAEPING COMPNY WETH THE DRAEGS O' HYUMAN S'CIETY...
NOO OOFENSE THERE, MAET...
AEM SYOOR YEW 'AVE YOOR GEWD POINTS AZ WAYLL
HUH?
OH! NO OFFENSE TAKEN...
QUITE ALL RIGHT.

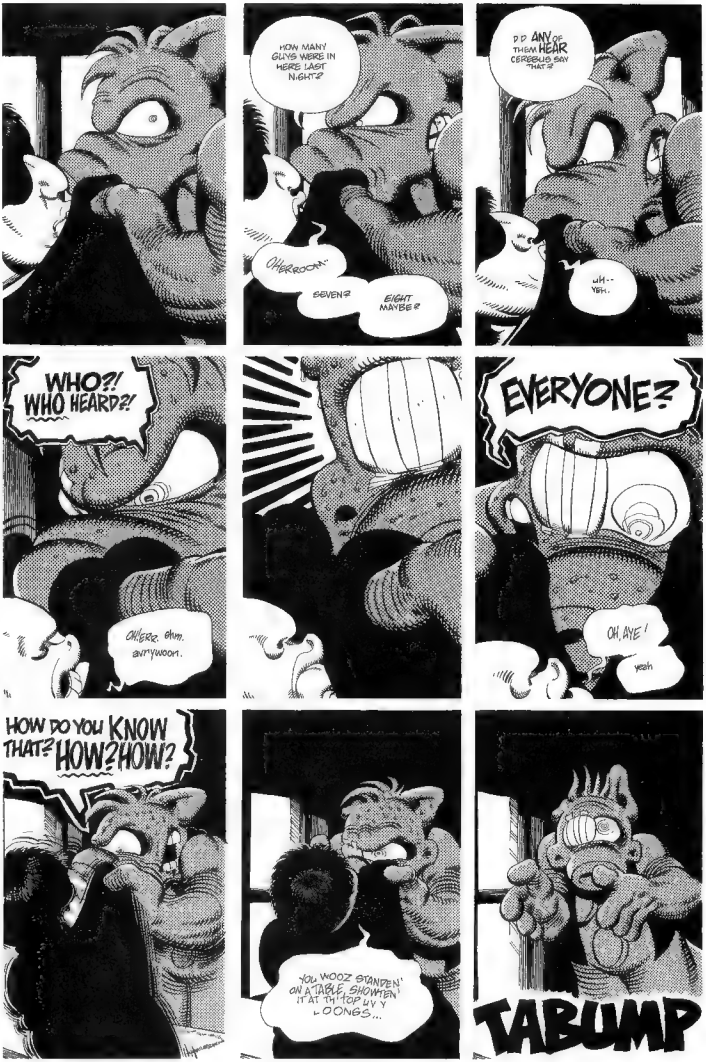

AS FER YEW (Y'GRDET LUMMOX) TREKEN A TYEW-YEAR OLD TAE A FLOOTEN' CREEP GAME AN' THAN, I REMZEN 'I'M TRAEYEN' TAE GOO 'TROUBLE 'R' NOTHEN' ON 'SNAKE EYES'...
SNAKE EYES MIND?
YOOR LUCKY I 'AVEN' CREPPLED YEW!
AN' I YAE GIVE YA IT
AN' POORE ANNE--TRAEYEN' T'EXPLAIN TAE WEE CALLUM THET NOO, JEMMY DONUTS EZN'T Y'NYEW DEDDY AND 'NOO, 'E DEDN'T WEN Y'FAER AND SQUAER'— AND 'NOO, CALLUM CANNA HAVE A WEE SCOTCH WETH YZ TEA.
'BAW-BAW SCOSH' 'BAW-BAW SCOSH'— ALL THE LEV-LONG DAEY.
EXPAIGT WEIR PROUD OF OORSAELVES 2
NOO
YE'LL HAVE TAE SPEAK UP— I CANNA HEAR YEW!
NO.
SNIFF
NOO, I EXPAIGT WE AREN'T

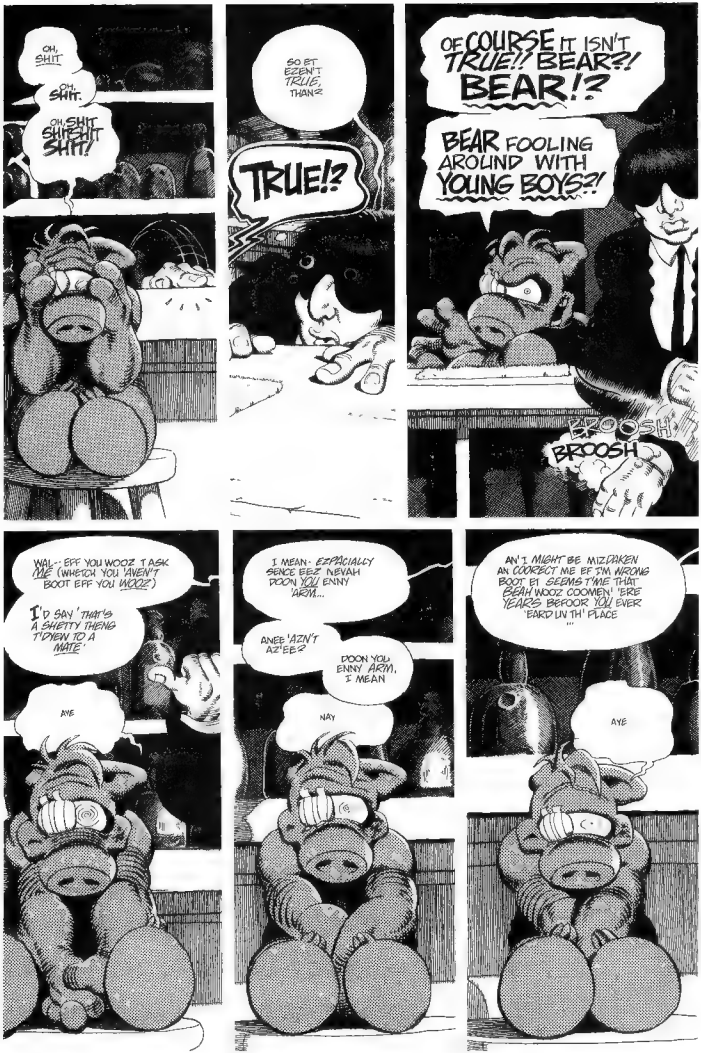
AN' TAE OFF THAT SELLY HAT!
SNATCH!
NOO YOOR COOMEN 'OME WI' ME AN I WASNT YE TAE THENK ABOOT HOOW YOOR GOON TAE EGSPLAEN TAE WEE CALUM'S GRAN'MOOM WOOPE RITHER DRAESS UP AS A MON— AN HAENG ABOOT EN STRAENGE TASVERNS DRAENKEN AN' SMOOKEN' AN' CARRYEN' ON— THEN MAEND HER OON GRAN'CHELDREN
D'YE KEN WHUT I'M TAELLEN' YEW?
; sheff :
AYE
RAEGHT THAN— NOO THIT WEV DOON AIRIN' TH' MCQUARRY FAMLY'S DERTY LENEN EN POOBLEK FOOR TH' GAENERAL AMYOOSEMENT OOV ALL AN' SOONDRY
AYE'LL BE OOF 'OME
WHAET'RE YEW TYEW STARRIN' AT?
SQUEEK SQUEEK
SHEFF - I'M SOORY, ALEC
THERE, THERE
'SAWRAEGHT, JEMMY DONUTS TEWK GEWD CARE OV 'IM.

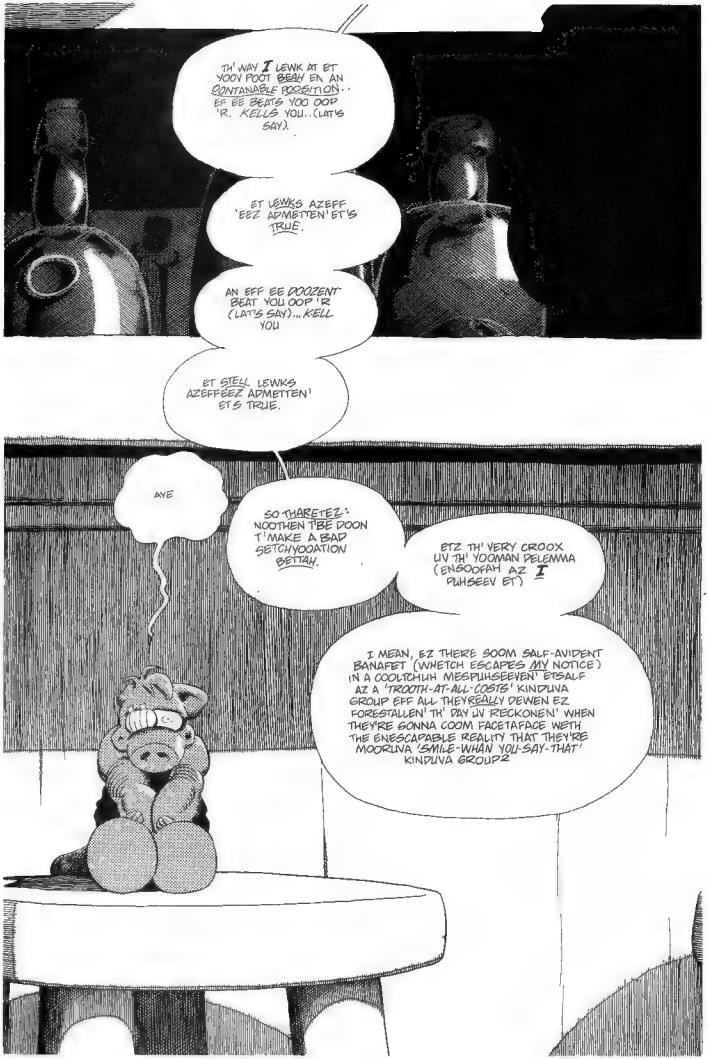
THADDZA SHAME, AYE?
BENOOZ SOOCHA NIZE OWLD MAN.
..OWLD WOMAN..
OWLD... WOOYEAH
OWL WAZE KEEPEN TO 'IM..
'ER
EY'S
SELF
M
I NEVAH NOW WOOT T'SAY T'SOOMWOON WHAN I FIND OUT THEY REA DEGENERATE.
D'Y'RECKON THEY'RE LIKE ONE2 DEGENERATES, I MEAN
THATEZ-- D'Y'SPOSE THEY JOOST WAKE OOP WOON DAY BATHED EN THE ELYOOMINATION OF NYOO INSIGHTZ LIKE. NOW I KNOW WHUT TH' PROBLEM EZ-- AYM IN LOOV..
'FEFTEEN YEARS MELKEN TH' SAME COW AN' I NEVAH WOONCE NOTICED THET I GET A 'STEFFY' WHENEVAH I GAZE ENTO TH' SOOTRY DEPTHS OON 'ER SOULFUL BROWN EYES'
OOR D'Y'RECKON EYS MOORLYAN EMPAIRSONAL LOOSTY-LATHERY AN MALESTIC KINDOVA-THENGZ Y'KNOW-- LIKE 'CONS! CONS! AN' AIRY WOONUN THEAM JOOST CLAMOOREN T'AVE TH' BIZNEZZ AND OON ME THROBBEN LOOV NOOSELL PLOOMEN ENTO THEIH MOOSTY, GRATE..."
WHAT ARE YOU ASKING CEREBUS FOR?
I DUNNO
I RECKON YOO'VE SEEN SOOM STOOF -- FORNUH POPE, FORNUH PRIME MINISTUH -AN' ALL THAT

WA' BEAM FRENSTNCE
BEAR?
WHAT ABOUT BEAR?
WE'THTHESS 'JYOONWUH RECROOTIEN CAMP' UVIZ (SOOCH AZ ET WOOZ) - WOOZ ET AN 'ALL-TH TIME-YKNEW-IM' KINDOOVA THENG?
'R PIDDES AWAKEN WOON DAY T'TH' PEJUVUBIAL 'INVAHDEY-ELLYOOMENRTEN' MOOMEN' UVITALL?
AN' EF ET'S TH' LATTUH EVENTYOOALITY WOOZ ET A SPECIFIC 'JOONUH RECROOT WHETCH AROUZDIUZ ENWIHTED AN' THUHTOO LONG-SOOPRESSED APPETITES?
'R WOOZ ET NOORUVAN 'ENVY-DWUD-JYOONWUH-RECROOT-POOP SHLITE IN-A-STORM-WILL-DO' KINDUVATHENG?
JUNIOR RECRUITING CAMPS? WHAT JUNIOR RECRUITING CAMP?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
TH' WOON 'E STOCKPILED WITH IZ PONDUHED 'N' PUHPYOOMED BUM-CHOONS WITH THEIH PEAK
WHAT!
OSTRETCH FEATHUHS STECKEN' OOT UV THEIH
WHAAT!
SOOTHUHN EXPOSURES

THAT'S FOOKEN AMAZEN'
TH WAY Y WENT FROOM A SETTEN' TYEW A STANDEN' POOSITION WETHOUT TOOTCHEN ANYTHEN' ON TH WAY OOP
D'Y'THENK YOU COOD TEACH ME THAT WOON?
OOLP!
WHO TOLD YOU THAT--
FOUL PACK OF LIES ABOUT BEAR.
Y-Y YOU DED
CEREBUS DID
AYE!
YEAH.
LAS' NIGHT WHAN YOU WOOZ DROONK.


HOW MANY GUYS WERE IN HERE LAST NIGHT?
OHGROOH.
SEVEN?
EIGHT MAYBE?
DO ANY OF THEM HEAR CERBERUS SAY THAT?
UH.. YEH.
WHO?! WHO HEARD?!
OHGRR. Ohm. anmywoon.
EVERYONE?
OH, AYE!
yeah
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT? HOW? HOW?
YOU WOOZ STANDIN' ON A TABLE, SHOUTIN' IT AT TH' TOP UV Y LOONGS...
TABUMP


OH, SHIT
OH, SHIT.
OH SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT!
SO IT EZEN'T TRUE, THAN?
TRUE!?
OF COURSE IT ISN'T TRUE!! BEAR?! BEAR!?
BEAR FOOLING AROUND WITH YOUNG BOYS?!
BROOSH
BROOSH
WAL-: EFF YOU WOOZ I ASK ME (WHEICH YOU 'AVEN'T BOOT EFF YOU WOOZ)
I'D SAY 'THAT'S A SHITTY THENG T'OPEN TO A MATE'
AYE
I MEAN- ESPECIALLY SENCE EBZ NEVAH DOON YOU ENNY HARM...
ANEE 'IZN'T AZ' EE?
DOON YOU ENNY HARM, I MEAN
NAY
AN' I MIGHT BE MIZTAKEN AN COORRECT ME EF I'M WRONG BOOT EI SEEMS T'ME THAT BEAH WOOZ COOMEN' 'BRE YEARS BEFOOR YOU EVER 'EARD UV 'TH' PLACE
AYE


TH' WAY I LEWK AT ET YOOV POOT BEAH EN AN CONTANABLE BOOSITION.. EF EE BEATS YOO OOP 'R KELLS YOU..(LAT'S SAY).
ET LEWKS AZEFF 'EEZ ADMETTEN' ET'S TRUE.
AN EFF EE DOOZENT BEAT YOU OOP 'R (LAT'S SAY)... KELL YOU
ET STELL LEWKS AZEFFEEZ ADMETTEN' ET'S TRUE.
AYE
SO THARETEZ: NOOTHEN TBE DOON T' MAKE A BAD SETCHYOOATION BETTAH.
BTZ TH' VERY CROOX UV 'TH' YOOMAN DELEMMA (ENSOOPAH AZ I PUHSEEV ET)
I MEAN, EZ THERE SOOM SALF-AVIDENT BANAFET (WHETCH ESCAPES MY NOTICE) IN A COOLTCHUH MESPUHSEEVEN' ETSALF AZ A 'TROOTH-AT-ALL-COSTS' KINDUVA GROUP EFF ALL THEY REALLY DEWEN EZ FORESTALLEN' TH' DAY UV RECKONEN' WHEN THEY'RE GOINA COOM FACETAFACE WETH THE ENESCAPABLE REALITY THAT THEY'RE MOORUVA 'SMILE-WHAN YOU-SAY-THAT' KINDUVA GROUP?

ET'S SOOMTHENG OOYA...
!
YOOR JOOST FOOLLUV LITTLE SPRIZES T DAY
ARNYOO
MAKEN' Y SALF REAL SMOLE - KE THAT - IZZ IT NOONATHAM SMOKE AN' MIRRORS DEALS?
THAT'S IT!!
WOOT'S ET?
CEREBUS HAS TO QUIT DRINKING.

AVE YOOV SAID THAT B'FORE
THIS TIME CEREBUS MEANS IT
YOOV SAID THAT B'FORE ALTSO
THIS TIME CEREBUS REALLY MEANS T
YOOV SAID THAT B'FORE, TOO
THIS TIME CEREBUS REALLY, REALLY, REALLY MEANS IT..
YOOV SAID THAT B'FORE AZWELL
THIS TIME CEREBUS MEANS IT ON HIS WORD OF HONOUR
CEREBUS IS SWEARING A SOLEMN OATH TO QUIT DRINKING!

WELL?
'WAL' WOOT 2
AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY, 'CEREBUS HAS SAID THAT BEFORE, TOO!?!
TH' LAS' TIME I DID - YOU BOPPED ME WOON
(RIGHT ON ME BEAK)
?!
SIGH
RIGHT I BELIEVE YOU
IS THAT AN 'I-BELIEVE-YOU-BECAUSE-I-CAN-SEE-YOU'RE-SERIOUS-THIS-TIME' KIND OF A THING?--
OR AN 'I-BELIEVE-YOU BECAUSE-IF-I-SAY-I-DON'T-BELIEVE-YOU-YOU'RE-GOING-TO-BOP ME-ON-THE-BEAK-AGAIN' KIND OF A THING?

WAL.
THAT RE'LIMING OOS TO TH' CROOX OOV TH' YOOMAN DELEMMA OOQZENT ET?
'YES'
OOR A BOP ON ME BEAK
THAT BEIN TH' CASE:
'YES.'
YOU DON'T HAVE TO SOUND SO ... ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT IT
NOW 'EE TELLS ME
AFTER I'VE DEBASED MESALF WETH AN 'IPPOCRETICAL DESPLAY LIV FALSE CONVIVIALITY

memoir

WHY AN AARDVARK?

part four

If it seems, to the gossip-starved reader, that I have scrupulously avoided "juicy human details" in the first three parts of this memoir, let me hasten to assert that that was very much my intention. It would be self-indulgent to an unconscionable degree for me to roast my ex-wife on a literary spit month after month with "my side of the story." For those eager to devour a carefully crafted "she said, I said" autobiographical fiction (as I have asserted elsewhere, I believe *all* autobiography is fiction), I can dispense with the human side of the Dave-and-Deni Story — or my side of it, at least — in a paragraph or two:

While I had made great progress in formulating the structure and direction of my career by the time I was twenty, of women, of relationships, I knew nothing. I was a complete and utter babe in the woods. I hadn't the slightest inkling that serious damage effected through acts of bad faith could not be undone. Damage to the foundation of a relationship is permanent, and one soldiers on with raw wounds which heal improperly and continue to fester beneath the pink of psychic or emotional scar tissue. By the time the nearly seven years of our relationship had run their course, the tissue of our marriage was composed almost exclusively of our accumulated scars. What sense of loss there was at the end (and there was a sense of loss) was overshadowed by the bright potential of starting clean on a new page. The dissolution of the marriage, like the end of the professional relationship (which limped on for a number of months after the personal separation), was without acrimony, regret, or bitterness.

(I will add, parenthetically, before moving onto the larger points I wish to make, that it came as another great surprise, in my education about women, relationships, and their respective natures, that there is no such thing as "starting clean on a new page." I had eleven years of hard lessons on this very subject before I was able to begin a new page with a nature more or less cleansed of the psychic grime I had carried with me to that point.)

It is important to remember that Dave and Deni's relationship began as a professional one. Through the immediate origin of Dave as Publishing Expert and *Cerebus* the Fanzine Consultant/Deni as Aspiring Publisher, through the period of Dave, Commercial Artist/Deni, Commercial Artist's Agent occurring simultaneously with Dave, *Cerebus* Artist and Writer/Deni, *Cerebus* Publisher, and the beginning of the end with Dave, *Cerebus* Artist and Writer/Deni, Comics Publisher, the balance of power in the professional relationship shifted with each new incarnation. In discussing boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands and wives, one inches cautiously onto the thin ice of using phrases like "balance of power" — one reason that this piece required a three-part preamble.

Let's return to the John-and-Yoko, Barry-and-Linda, Dave-and-Deni declension introduced in the last installment. At the point when Linda was correcting my misapprehension that her relationship with Barry at the time of Gorblimey Press was one of neatly separated responsibilities — Barry the creative half, Linda the business half — what was at issue was very much the balance of power involved. What other reason would there be for Linda to make so much of an issue of my erroneous impression? While there is much that is romantic, much that would be a source of pride in being She Who Takes Care of the Big Bad World While the Creative Titan Labours at His Easel — and to the unpracticed eye and the unthinking mind only a difference in shading between that and She Who Takes Care of the Details While the Creative Titan Both Labours at His Easel and Plots the Course and Shape and Content of the Business Implications of His Creativity — Linda recognized that the two occupied opposing ends of a spectrum: as different as white and black, red and blue. In carelessly amplifying her role in the Gorblimey Press experiment, I was diminishing Barry's. The note struck resonated loudly, for to be honest — particularly at the time of the conversation — Aardvark-Vanaheim more or less mirrored the actuality of Gorblimey Press. I was troubled by the disparity between the reality of Aardvark-Vanaheim and my portrayal of it, and I remember fumbling for any sort of lucid reply. I might even have said something along the lines of: "Oh, sure. That's the way we do it, too. Deni's more of a helper than a partner."

At the time, I rationalised to myself that, while it was true that I was the one setting the overall course for Aardvark-Vanaheim as the business vehicle for the *Cerebus* comic book, this was already changing. Having set in motion a "showcase" section in the back of the book called "Unique Stories," an attempt was being made to restore the initial balance which existed in the professional relationship — Dave the Creator and Deni the Publisher. There was, after all, a world of difference between doing the business chores on your husband's comic book and being a publisher. Now that my course was set — I had my own comic book to write and draw for twenty-six years — no larger fulfillment was imaginable in my case. Deni and I would, together, turn back the calendar five years and work to achieve Deni's seminal dream. Any lucid examination of the situation would have revealed the inherent flaw. Deni had originally intended to publish a forum for her own and others' creativity in prose and pictures, with fantasy and science fiction as theme. We were "through the looking-glass" and into the uncharted waters of the comic-book direct market, where the balance of power still favoured me and not her. I was the one who sifted through the potential "other books" for Aardvark-Vanaheim to publish and set them in motion. In the case of Bill Loebs and Bob Burden, I was fulfilling my fannish desire (in Bill's case fired by my enthusiasm for his story "Abortion" in *Nucleus* and in Bob's by the Flaming Carrot's *Visions* appearances) to provide a secure "nest"

for their creativity. I made almost all of the decisions (I did make all the major decisions) and left Deni to implement them. We were very much in a no-man's-land between Barry-and-Linda and John-and-Yoko. What potential lost! Had we shared a clear-eyed assessment of our situation, had Deni said, "Look, I want to do the digest magazine that started this whole thing. I want you to go back to the original arrangement — design, a few illustrations, and a bit of advice here and there. But I want to be the one in charge. I want to call it *Cerebus* because I came up with the name. We can afford to pay fanzine rates for the contributors, the printing bill, and not have to worry if it turns a profit right away or loses money for a year or two," that would have been very Barry-and-Linda. Instead, like Charles Foster Kane building Susan her opera house, I was determined to be an Earth-Pygmalion and to mold and shape and sell to the world My Fair Deni as the Publisher of the World's Greatest Cartoonists (with apologies to Fantagraphics). If this seems overly dramatic, it must be remembered that my perception of my life and career — at the time — was grandiose to a very nearly pathological extent. I never doubted for a moment that the comic-book field was *the* place to be in the late seventies and early eighties. My view of comic books as a medium of limitless potential and my determination to be a significant presence in the field as it began to fulfill that potential were central to my thinking.

Crack!

The ice gets very thin at this point in the description as it did then in our professional relationship. For here we swerve over into John-and-Yoko territory. I was very much a child of my time and had the unshakable faith that what was going on in the comic-book field in the late 1970s was at least as significant, at least as incendiary, as what was going on in rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s. In retrospect, my choice to take what *was* significant, what *was* incendiary (self-publishing), and to transmogrify it into something pedestrian and commonplace (just another comic-book company publishing creator-owned titles) can be attributed almost entirely to the John-and-Yoko Syndrome. As can be seen in my first *Comics Journal* interview (more pernicious still — Dave and Deni's *Comics Journal* interview), I took great pains to disseminate the view that we were equal partners of equal importance. It wasn't enough that you liked John Lennon's comic book, you had to see Yoko through his eyes, share his admiration of her. The parallels are obvious. The resources upon which we drew were the *Cerebus* profits (read: Beatle money); the 1982 U.S. Tour wasn't the *Cerebus* tour or the Dave Sim Tour — it was the Dave & Deni Tour. The very foundation of self-publishing that made it so revolutionary — that the comic-book creator was the dominant, significant, and irreplaceable element and that comic-book business people were secondary, insignificant, and interchangeable — was undone at every turn in the interests of being the comic-book John and Yoko. The balance of power in the professional relationship shifted dramatically in Deni's direction. Where once the fulcrum had slid delicately (and sometimes not so delicately) between us along the straight line which connected Point Deni and Point Dave, it was now replaced by a wheel-like configuration. Deni the Publisher was the hub, and Dave and *Cerebus* became one of many spokes. That configuration — a natural perception in a capitalist society — was in turn at odds with the actual wheel: the *Cerebus* profits at the hub and all spokes issuing from it. The tug of war between perception-as-reality and the reality-not-readily-perceived put us at odds. Like a complete novice I had stepped into a trap. Aardvark-Vanaheim was now indistinguishable from Eclipse Publishing, for all intents and purposes. A comic-book company was a comic-book company was a comic-book company.

Crack! *Crack!*

At this point the ice is too thin to venture across in the current political climate, so my route, of necessity, becomes circuitous. In our case, the resolution — dissolution — became inevitable. Deni rankled at her dependence on me and *Cerebus*. I rankled at the mushrooming size of the operation, which depended on an ever-expanding line of books to stay ahead of the cash-flow problem.

The real crunch time came when I heard — indirectly from an unimpeachable source — that Deni had begun to form her own publishing imprint and was making overtures to several cartoonists to be published by her. The publishing imprint was to be her ace in the hole if we were unable to agree on any additional title she was interested in publishing. Already we had been offered two projects within a few weeks of each other — one of which she wanted Aardvark-Vanaheim to publish (*normalman*) and the other that I thought we should publish (*Megaton Man*).

The writing was very much on the wall. Something had to give.

Next: Final Chapter

Personal Appearances

MAY 18
(F.E.) M.A.L.E.
(First Ever) Massachusetts
Alternative Literature Expo
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
WHITES OF WESTPORT
Westport, Mass.
e-mail: kgpalmer@aol.com.

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Oakley & Rob Walton)
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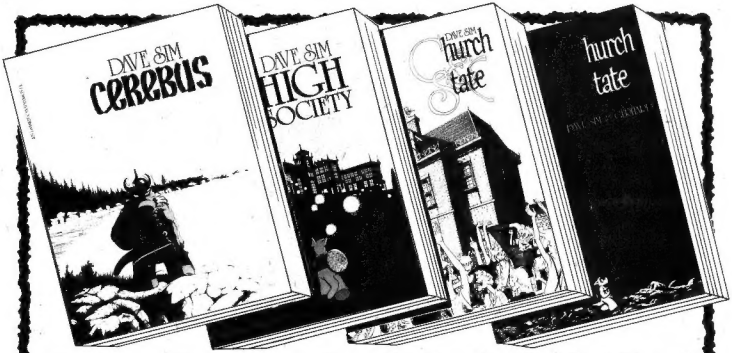

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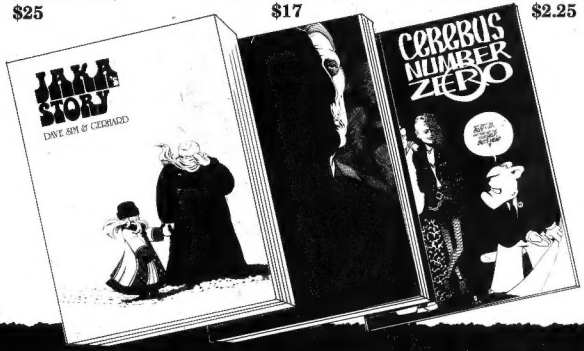

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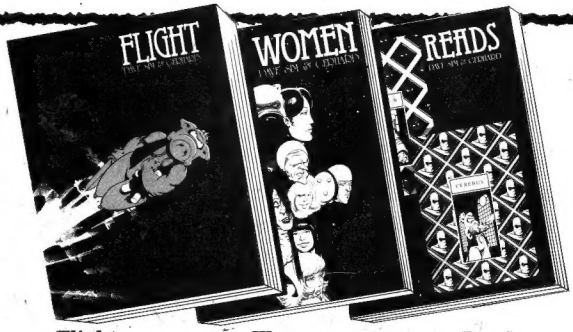

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CEREBUS
MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS
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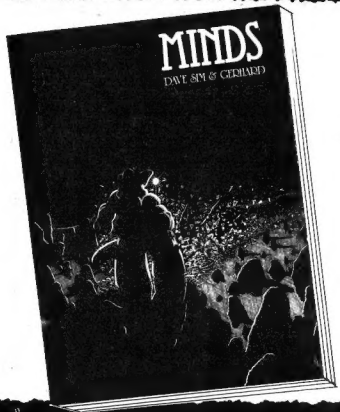

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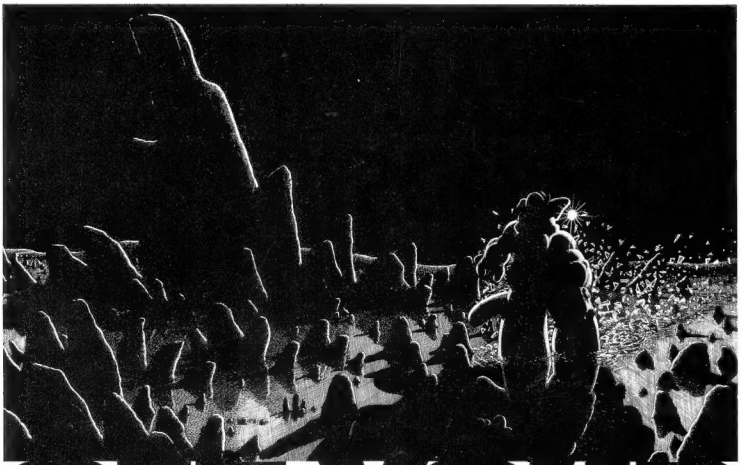

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Dave Sim
&
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280-page
conclusion
to
Mother's & Daughters
'Minds'
on display

June 20th
to
August 18th

•

signing & reception:
Saturday June 29th
(members only)

•

for information about
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